

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 13338 210946Z
ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-02 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0466
INFO EC COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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UNCLAS BONN 13338

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, EEC, GW, UR, CSCE
SUBJECT: SCHMIDT INTERVIEW ON SOVIET DISSIDENT TRIALS

REFS: A) BONN 13142; B) STATE 178559

1. DURING AN INTERVIEW WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, WHICH
APPEARED IN THE JULY 21 EDITION OF THE GERMAN WEEKLY
DIE ZEIT (REPORTED SEPTEL BY ICA), THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE
TOOK PLACE:

2. BEGIN TEXT. "DIE ZEIT: DO YOU CONSIDER IT
COINCIDENTAL OR INTENTIONAL THAT THE SENTENCES IN THE
SOVIET DISSIDENT TRIALS WERE ANNOUNCED DURING PRESIDENT
CARTER'S VISIT? IN ADDITION, WAS IT A COINCIDENCE THAT
THE NICO HUEBNER SENTENCE WAS ANNOUNCED SHORTLY BEFORE
THE VISIT?

3. SCHMIDT: I CONSIDER THE TIMING ACCIDENTAL BUT NOT
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THE SENTENCES. SUCH SENTENCES REFLECT THE POLITICAL
STATE OF THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED. THESE ARE SENTENCES
WHICH ARE INCOMPREHENSIBLE FOR US AND WHICH MUST AROUSE
INDIGNATION.

4. I WOULD, HOWEVER, LIKE TO ADD THIS: WHEN ONE RECALLS
THE SITUATION THAT EXISTED IN EASTERN EUROPE TEN OR

THIRTY YEARS AGO, ONE RECOGNIZES A POSITIVE CHANGE. PREVIOUSLY, PEOPLE WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR POLITICAL REASONS. THIS NO LONGER HAPPENS. FORMERLY, DISSIDENTS COULD NOT OBTAIN A HEARING AND COULD NOT GIVE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS TO WESTERN NEWSPAPERS. THERE WAS ALSO MUCH LESS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. MEASURED IN OUR TERMS, THE PRESENT DEGREE OF PERSONAL FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IS LIMITED, MUCH TOO LIMITED. BUT WHEN COMPARED WITH THE SITUATION THAT PREVAILED TEN YEARS AGO THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

5. I HOPE THAT WE WILL MAKE MORE PROGRESS IN THE FUTURE. . . . THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT HAS DEFINITELY NOT BEEN FULFILLED IN MANY POINTS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN PERFORMANCE ON BASKET III. OF COURSE NO ONE EXPECTED THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD IN A FEW DAYS.

6. I AM A LITTLE CONCERNED THAT THE MANNER IN WHICH SOME OF OUR MEDIA IS HANDLING THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION IN THE EAST COULD PRODUCE A COUNTER REACTION AND IMPERIL PROGRESS ALREADY MADE. IN ANY CASE, NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER STATES IS AMONG THE PRINCIPLES AGREED UPON IN HELSINKI. IT IS IMPORTANT TO SPEAK OPENLY, ALSO WITH THE SOVIET UNION. HOWEVER, NO ONE WILL BENEFIT IF THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER COUNTRIES

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ARE BACKED INTO A CORNER. END TEXT
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